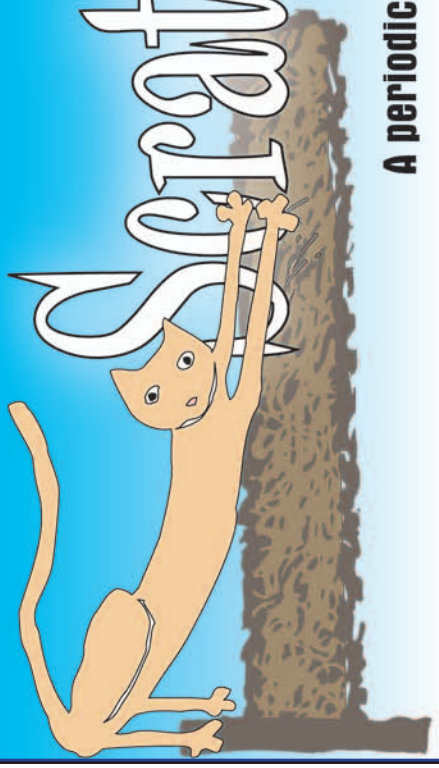
Cat Tales, Inc.
ANIMAL RESCUE

Scratching Post

A periodic newsletter of the Cat Tales Animal Rescue

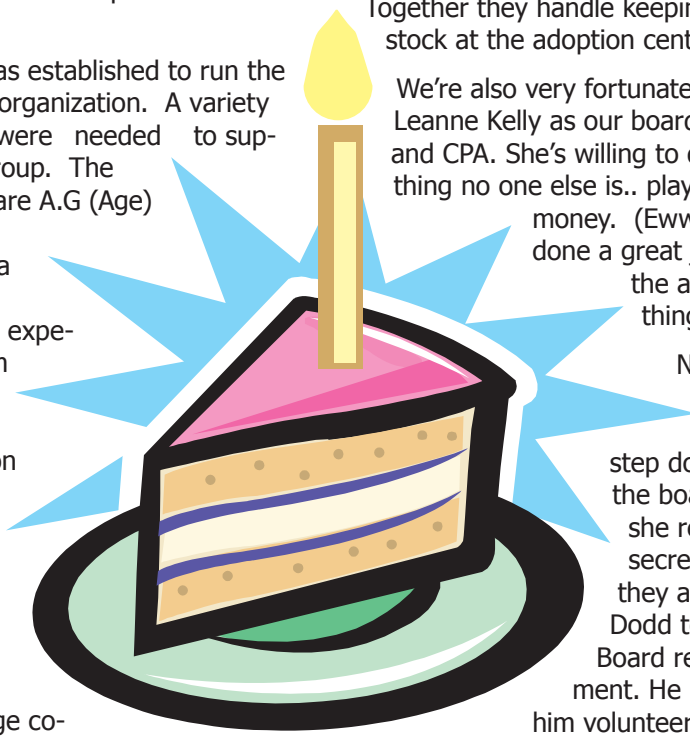


We're One Year Old!

We are one year old. (Actually, it was a year last month, but we wanted to make sure we made it past twelve months.) It's been a tough year for us. We were formed out of the chaos of another animal organization that ran into legal problems. With a core of people, deeply interested in the welfare of cats (and other animals too), Cat Tales was formed.

We were very idealistic and made grand plans. We talked to a lawyer, who helped us incorporate our new organization.

A board was established to run the non-profit organization. A variety of skills were needed to support the group. The founders are A.G (Age) Stephens and Melissa Mainieri. They bring experience from the previous animal organization and an understanding of the logistics of running an animal rescue. Age coordinates surrender calls, fosters, and does administrative stuff. Melissa's been involved in rescues at least 8-9 years. She's our PR person and coordinates adoptions. She's got a natural affinity for public speaking which often works well for that PR thing.



Steph Halczenko is a certified Veterinary nurse (CVT) and has worked in general practice eight years, with a position in emergency and critical care for the past two years. Her roles include volunteer coordination and assuring the medical needs of our cats at the adoption centers are met.

Jean Carleton is our foster home coordinator on the Board. She helped set up our agreement with Rockhill Veterinary Hospital and manages the collection of Acme grocery receipts that give us a percentage of the total.

Jason and Nicole Kamienski are also on the Board. Both had been animal rescue volunteers for quite a while and participated at many fund raising events. Nicole is our current secretary. Together they handle keeping things in stock at the adoption centers.

We're also very fortunate to have Leanne Kelly as our board member and CPA. She's willing to do something no one else is.. play with money. (Eww.) She's done a great job with the accounting thing.

Nicole found it necessary to step down from the board (but she remains secretary) and they asked Jeff Dodd to be her Board replacement. He brings with him volunteer experience from the Philadelphia Zoo and other groups. He's got advertising and PR experience which should prove invaluable to our cause.

It is this collection of people who are responsible for the short term care of the cats and who are dedicated to finding them good homes. They don't do this without the assistance of numerous wonderful volunteers and the gracious businesses that provide space for our adoption centers.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact a board member with your concerns.

To Declaw or Not To Declaw...

By Nicole A. Kamienski

That is the question many perspective cat/kitten owners ask themselves as they contemplate adoption. In fact, this is an argument that has spawned many relentless debates throughout the Rescue and Veterinary worlds. Ultimately, the decision is that of the individual pet owner and their Vet. That being said, here are some facts that you may not have considered that can help you to make an educated decision about choosing what is best for you and your cat.

A cat's claws serve many purposes; claws help cats climb and maintain their balance, claws offer protection and allow cats to establish boundaries with people and other animals, cats use their claws to mark territory, and they also allow a cat to grasp a favorite play toy. Scratching is a natural behavior that allows cats to remove the outer sheath of their nails they shed as the nails grow as well as sharpen the new nail underneath. Scratching allows cats to mark territories by releasing substances that can be recognized by other cats from glands in their paws. Finally, is also a form of kitty exercise, enabling cats to stretch their bodies completely and strengthen their paws.

Surgery is an option that offers a permanent solution. However, it is not without complications. As with any surgery, it carries the risk of bleeding, infection and anesthesia related problems. The actual surgical procedure involves the removal of the cat's claw and the last bone of each toe. Essentially, it is comparable to removing the tip of each of your fingers at the first joint. Normally, the procedure is only performed on the cat's front paws and it usually requires an overnight stay at the Veterinary Hospital. It can take a cat up to 14 days to fully recover. However, the majority of cats do very well after the surgery with little or no sensitivity in their paws.

It is very important not to allow a declawed cat to go outdoors at any time. There are many dangers lurking outside for a declawed cat. There is still a lot of controversy whether declawing can change the personality of the cat. It is appropriate to discuss all possibilities with your Vet when making this important decision.

Regular trimming of your cat's nails can offer a less invasive and less expensive alternative to surgery. Have your Vet show you the proper way to clip you cat's nails to ensure the safety of both you and your cat. By keeping your cat's nails short, you can prevent any potential damage that can be caused by your cat's scratching. Whenever possible, start when your kitten is still young and continue trimming its nails at regular intervals. If you are adopting an older cat, make sure that you touch the cat's paws periodically during regular petting and play sessions. This will allow you to gradually hold your cat's paws for longer periods of time without stress. Start with just clipping a few nails at a time and don't forget to reward your cat's good behavior with lots of praise and treats!

Regular trimming of your cat's nails can offer a less invasive and less expensive alternative to surgery.

In addition to regular nail trimming, there are several products that are marketed that allow cats to scratch safely and without damaging your furniture. Scratching posts come in a variety of sizes, colors and textures. Finding one is as simple as looking in your local grocery/pet specialty store. Other products include caps that fit over your cat's nails to prevent damage caused by scratching, sticky plastic that you can place on the corners of your furniture that cats don't find pleasing, and spray to prevent scratching on certain areas of your home. These products may only be sold in pet specialty stores.

Please contact your vet to discus all of these options or, contact Cat Tales at 215-218-9998 and, we will be happy to discus these and other options that may be available to you.

Guest of the Month: Gracie

The featured feline this month is a 3-year old female calico named "Gracie." She has been spayed, declawed, tested negative for FeLV/FIV and has all of her shots. She tells her own story...

"Hi! My name is Gracie. When my first parents moved in with their daughter, I didn't see eye-to-eye with her cats. This has made me suspicious. If you are looking for a cat that you can call "Sweetie-Pie" or "Lovey-Dovey," then don't stop at my cage! I'm not one of those wimpy cats. I'm a lot more, let's say... challenging... than that.

"I'm independent and like to do it my way and when I am good and ready. My new owner will have to earn my respect and will have to follow MY rules because it is all about me.

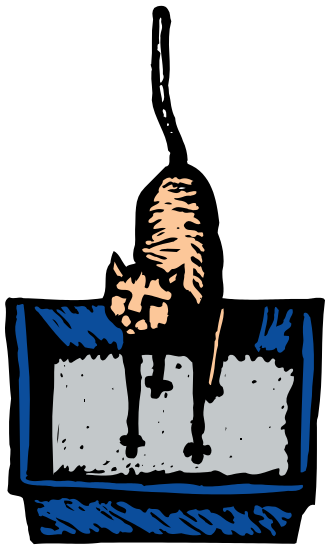
"Here are my simple rules:

1. **I** am the boss. If you thought you were... get over it!
2. Feed me everyday and give me fresh water. An occasional snack will keep you in my graces.
3. Brush my hair frequently to keep me beautiful.
4. I run a one-cat household. So I'm the only one.
5. If there are any questions, see rule #1.

"After I have had a chance to size you up, I'll decide if you are worthy of my affection. I might purr once in awhile (I mean, there is nothing better than being brushed and feeling beautiful). If no one is around and you whisper real, real low... you can call me... shh... Snuggles, Puty-Tat, Sweet-Kitty, ... but if you tell anyone I said this I will deny it!"

Gracie

You can see Gracie and several others of our furry friends at the Cat Tales adoption centers listed on the back of the newsletter



Single room, two meals a day, private litter box.

A single cat cannot afford these simple accommodations. You can help by sponsoring a "cat condominium" to help defray the costs of keeping and caring for cats until we find them a happy home.

$10.00 a month

Your contribution will cover veterinary bills, food and litter. In exchange, each month you will get a photo and letter from one of the cats.

"Recipes from the Servants Kitchen"

With a target of Mother's Day, 2004, Cat Tales is looking to compile a cookbook of our favorite recipes and cat stories. If you have a favorite recipe that drives your cat wild, or if you cat "supervises" while you cook or you have a great cat story related to a meal you've cooked, please share your recipes with us.

We're looking for recipes for appetizers, soups and salads, breads, entrées and desserts. If you have something that fits in another category, we're still interested.

E-mail your recipes or questions to jdodd31@comcast.net with "CTI Cookbook" in the subject line. Jeff will try to get back to you in a few days. Thanks!

Kitten Test Drives New Car

Here are some photos of a small kitten which was found lodged inside of the bumper of Mercedes-Benz ML SUV.

Technicians and salesman alike at R&S Imports in Fort Washington, PA, worked for over four hours trying to extricate the kitten from what was sure to have been his last hiding place. Technicians had to wet-saw through the solid steel bumper then manually wedged open. The few-weeks-old kitten's head was stuck through a smaller hole inside the bumper which prevented it from turning around and getting out the way it had come in.

He was very thirsty and thin, estimated to have been in the bumper for a few days. Employees took turns keeping the kitten calm and wet with a squeeze-bottle to keep from being burned from the sparks from the wet-saw. The entire dealership stood around in a big circle and waited anxiously for the kitten to be freed. Whoops and hollers of happiness went out when he was freed and found to be in good health overall. Several employees then immediately drove the kitten to a 24-hour vet where he could receive medical help for dehydration and shock. He will become the pet of one of the service technicians who helped save his life. R&S is covering the cost of replacing the owner's bumper which was destroyed in the process.

It was amazing to see all the people come together to try to save the life of this kitten. We're really proud of everyone here.

We would like to thank Stephen Griffis, the provider of this story and to the staff and technicians of R&S Import of Fort Washington, PA for their heroic and noble efforts in the saving of the kitten.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

One cat may not look like much, but twelve... then in different stores... it's a lot. It's better when you can spread the work out, but things change.

We need volunteers. Lots. We can find a project for you that will meet you preferences.

We need people to feed cats and clean cages. Most of the kitties are happy to see you ("Hey, they've got food...), although some are afraid of people and some are grouchy (aren't we all?). We need people to work at least one day a week, in the mornings or evenings, seven days a week.

Can't cope with the idea of cleaning cages? How about just talking about cats? We need "ambassadors" in our adoption centers to answer questions and convince people a kitty would look wonderful on their windowsill. We would like people there for as much of a day as possible, but if you can offer us two hours, one day a week, in the morning or evening, that would be great.

Have some extra space at home and a few weeks? We need foster homes too. Many cats and kittens need a warm, safe home while we wait for space to open in the adoption centers. We work with you to get the cats scheduled for preventive medical care. If you foster kittens, you get the pleasure of giving them names.

Can't commit that kind of time? We also need "runners." On short notice, we need people to transport cats to the veterinary hospital.

How about lending a hand with some of our fund-raisers? We try to have "events" once or twice a month, at the adoption centers.

If you can help in any way, please call the number in the sidebar on the last page and we'll get back to you.

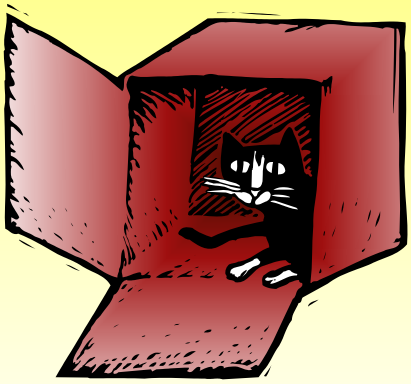
Thanks!

PETS Available:

- A lop-eared bunny, 10-months old, named Peter. Good with kids and people. Available for adoption in a few weeks.
- Two male parakeets.
- Male white-faced cockatiel named Percy. 3-years old, has 32-word vocabulary.
- Female 3-year old lutino cockatiel named Peekaboo. Loves to have her head scratched

Volunteers Needed!

- *Adoption center volunteers*
- *Foster parents*
- *Fund raising Volunteers*



If you can help us, please call

Upcoming Events

Cat Tales Inc. will be holding the following special events over the next few months. Please stop by and see us. Keep an eye open at the stores for details. (We have a new fund-raising director who isn't too organized yet.)

- **Apple Festival** - a bake sale of one of fall's favorite fruits. Some time in the fall, at PetsMart/Warminster.
- **Holiday Tea/Lunch** - light snacks and tea, with pinkies extended and silent auction. A fund-raiser for Cat Tales. If you have something you'd be willing to donate for the auction, that would be great too. On some weekend in November, maybe December, in a nice room, with chairs and nice tables.
- **Pictures With Santa** - for those of us who think our pets are more important that own offspring. Share the holiday memories with a picture of your pet on Santa's knee, unless your pet is larger than the average lap, then it can be at Santa's side. December 6, 7, 13, 14, 20 and 21 at PetsMart/Warminster. There will be another schedule for Petco/Trappe.
- **Literary Gift Wrap** - Cat Tales volunteers will be wrapping you gifts purchased in the store. Weekends, after Thanksgiving, and in December at Barnes and Noble, Willow Grove.
- **Hot dog sales** - not very exciting, but an effective way to raise money, a little at a time. Various weekends through the year at PetsMart/Warminster and Petco/Warminster.

Spay/Neuter Clinic Coming this Fall

If all cat owners were responsible, Cat Tales would not exist. Many of our cats come to us as kittens that "mysteriously appeared" in the laundry room after kitty has a raucous night out or that people find under the porch or in a window well.

Last year, Cat Tales volunteers participated in a spay/neuter clinic sponsored by another regional animal rescue organization. Over 100 cats, male and female, from foster homes, shelters and captured in back yards and empty lots, were brought to a veterinary hospital for shots and a simple surgical procedure.

Cat Tales is raising money for the clinic. It is schedule for November 2, but we will continue to accept money to cover medications and surgical supplies.

At left, the cat senses it is not a good idea to come out of the carrier. Below, the patient is prepped for surgery. Far left, feral cats are "tipped" to indicate that they've been neutered.

Left, the recovery ward, where the patients are kept warm on electric blankets and under towels. Above, the patient occasionally stirred as she came out of anesthetic. At right, checking vitals.

Lizzie's Fund Established

Below, you'd be surprised how much strength an eight pound cat can have. Further below, on the left, prepping for surgery. On the right, making sure they have all of the inoculations.

In the winter of 1995, a young girl begged her father to bring a poor dog inside. He wasn't yet aware of his love for animals and she did everything in hery power to convince him.

The dog lived in the house next to the girl's grandmother's property. The dog had been outcast. Multiple homes had taken her in, then rejected her. For the first year or so, she spent her life chained to a dog house outside.

Lizzie was frequently seen wearing a sign, "Dogs with homes helping cats without. Donate to Cat Tales this season."

The female dog was more special than words can describe. An angel wrapped in fur . Her long nose angled sharply as a youngster, with a black mask with a splash of white angling down the left side so that appeared as if she'd dipped her nose in ice cream. The German Shepherd/Sheltie mix was the girl's childhood companion, bringing something into her life that no human could provide: a friend; a listener; a loving spirit that understood that growing up was hard to do.

For the young girl, the rescue of animals became a mission. How many hundreds of wonderful animals were out there, waiting for homes that they'd never find? How many would remain outdoors, longingly watching as their humans drove away? How many would die alone? So it began. First, a litter of kittens slated to be drowned in the Poconos. Lizzie took them in and raised them as her own, playing the role of a momma cat. Lizzie was the single inspiration for what we do. She assisted the elderly by visiting nursing homes on several occasions to cheer up the residents. They commented on how soft she was, how pretty and well behaved. She was, after all, an angel with fur.

Lizzie plays surrogate mom to two kittens.

In February of this year, surgery was performed to try to save her life. Lizzie was released from this world in May 26th, 2003 after a three month struggle with bone cancer. A fund has been set up in her memory for pets in need of serious medical care. If you are interested in donating to Lizzie's Fund, send a check to the address on the back panel. You may be saving someone's angel.

Steph Halczenko

Scratching Post
is a periodic newsletter
of Cat Tales Inc. Animal Rescue, a no kill, non-profit volunteer organization working for the care and placement of cats in need.

P.O.Box 165, Warminster, PA 18976
Voice mail number at 215-218-9998

Our adoption centers are at:
Petco/Warminster
.....624 York Road, Warminster, PA 18974
Petsmart/Warminster
..... 934 W. Street Road, Warminster, PA 18974
Petco/Trappe
..... 130 W. Main Street, Trappe, PA 19426

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Want to keep in touch? Or not?

We hope you will like the stories and want to keep in touch.

You can help Cat Tales by asking for delivery of our "periodical" (meaning it comes out whenever we can get the cat fur off of the keyboard and get the cat to let go of the mouse) via e-mail. This will save us the cost of postage and printing. Send a message to our editor, Jeff at *jdodd31@comcast.net*. Then whenever we have another letter of cat (and maybe dog) stories, we'll e-mail the colorful newsletter to you as an Adobe PDF. (A free reader is available at http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html.) It will come from Jeff's e-mail address, so don't tag it as spam.

Not interested in receiving this in any form? Fine, just let us know at the phone number at the left and we'll remove your name from our mailing list as soon as we can. We still thank you for your previous support of Cat Tales.

Do you know of someone else that might be interested in receiving this? Please send us the name and we will be happy to add them to our list. We prefer to send it via e-mail (again, no postage or printing costs), but will send it via the US Post Office upon request.

Thanks!